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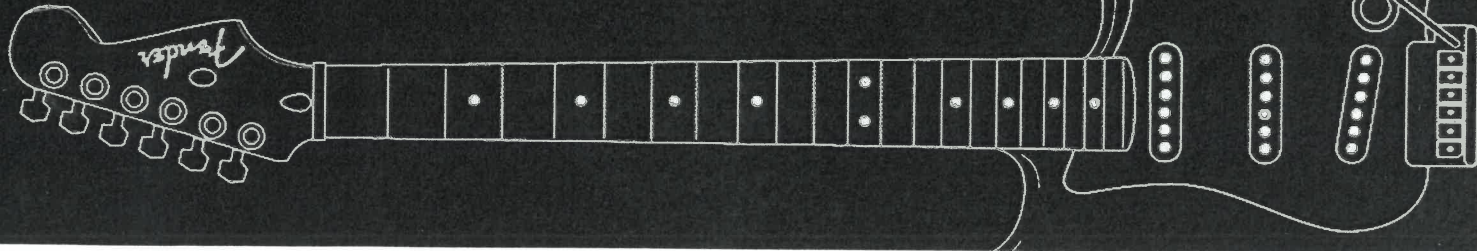
***Hail! Hail Rock 'n' Roll*** by John Harris  
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# *Hail! Hail!* **Rock 'n' Roll**



**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE MUSIC,  
THE MYTHS AND THE MADNESS**

**JOHN HARRIS**



***Hail!***  
***Hail!***  
***Rock'n'Roll***  
JOHN HARRIS

DESIGNED AND ILLUSTRATED  
BY  
HYWEL HARRIS



SPHERE

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# INTRODUCTION

Do you remember the first time? Someone put on a record, or a CD – or, if you were unlucky, a cassette, maybe put together by the weird guy in your older brother's RE class – and though you had probably heard rock'n'roll music on plenty of other occasions, you actually listened, and realised that something fantastic was afoot, and you would probably never be the same again. A lot of people mark that moment by frantically jumping up and down; others stay perfectly still. Whatever: you know it when it happens.

Sooner or later, something else occurs, when you realise that beyond the music, there's a whole other world: who plays which guitar, who got religion or a drug habit, which Rolling Stones album is the most pointless, whether Pink Floyd's intended *The Dark Side Of The Moon* as the secret soundtrack to *The Wizard Of Oz*, who is guilty of playing "landfill indie", and whether parliament once had a debate about the Beastie Boys' hydraulic penis. Such is a never-ending universe of fascination that leads overqualified obsessives to take low-paid jobs in record shops, doting fathers to beat a weekly retreat to the loft conversion, and otherwise sensible adults to spend hours shouting at each other in the pub – and really, who can blame them?

Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll is built from all this. You can make your way through it in any order you like, but by the end, you will know more about the glorious tangle that comes to mind every time a song hits the right spot: the history, the talk, the records, the gigs, the clothes, the finer points of the music, and the endless myths. When the idea was being developed, it was aimed at being a cross between a scientific field-guide and a vintage edition of *Rolling Stone Magazine* – which is to say that we somehow wanted it to feel as if just about everything was present and correct; as the *Spinal Tap* song would have it, "The majesty of rock/The mystery of roll/The ticking of the clock/The wailing of the soul."

Presented here is a selection of what's been completed so far. The work goes on, which is why I spent yesterday having long conversations about the Human League's haircuts, whether you can actually learn to play the bass guitar in an hour, and who made Elvis Presley's Vegas-era jump-suits. That stuff will be along shortly: for now, start reading...

John Harris, February 2009

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## Chapter 1 *The talk*

Includes the most enlightening thoughts of Keith Richards, Shaun Ryder and Sly Stone, Paul Weller's collected slag-offs, **Bob Dylan's evangelical sermons** and **the transcript of Oasis' most celebrated interview**

## Chapter 2 *The stage*

An across-the-boards expose of life backstage and front-of-house, including the complete history of Glastonbury, the most mind-boggling "rider" requests, the definitive map of the indie-rock "toilet circuit", **a complete Live Aid set-list** and **classic rock props**

## Chapter 3 *The kit*

Guitars, amps, drums, wires and all the rest of it – from Fenders, Gibsons and Rickenbackers, through such out-there keyboardular inventions as the Mellotron and Theramin, and on to **the story of the effects pedal** and **guitar history's most unusual suspects**

## Chapter 4 *The music*

The rudiments and rules of rock, including a guide to music's more obscure genres, the definitive Crap Rhyming Dictionary, the four songs that define the basis of 50% of all modern music, and **how to play the guitar in about an hour**

## Chapter 5 *The look*

Twenty-plus pages of image-based intrigue – among other things, a history of the rock moustache, the greatest pop glasses, the 50-year stories of costume and hair & make-up, and **the strange sartorial history of '70s glam-rock gods Slade**

## Chapter 6 *The albums*

Includes a walk through the difficult periods of Morrissey and David Bowie, the 25 rock follies that should never have been released, novice's guides to Can, P-Funk and **Captain Beefheart**, and the **Wizard Of Oz/Dark Side Of The Moon mystery explained**

## Chapter 7 *The Beatles*

The intrigue surrounding rock's most mythic group, including the "clues" that meant Paul was dead, The Beatles' women, an inside guide to the Apple empire, and **the up-and-down solo careers of all four ex-Fabs**

## Chapter 8 *The bonus tracks*

Everything else: Britain's rock grave-sites, every Elvis film (briefly) reviewed and rated, why so many rockers die at 27, **the strange roll-call of people mentioned in songs by the Manic Street Preachers** (from Mussolini to Madonna), and collaborations you'd never have seen coming

# BOB DYLAN'S BORN-AGAIN SERMONS

In late 1978, Bob Dylan became a born-again Christian, was duly baptized, recorded an evangelical album entitled *Slow Train Coming*, and eventually set out on the road to spread the good news. Though his audiences seemed sceptical, he kept on keeping on

"I'd like to say we're presenting the show tonight under the authority of Jesus Christ."  
*San Francisco, California, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1979*

"You know we read in the newspapers every day how bad the world is getting. The situation in Iran, the students rebelling, you know, even over here they're rebelling. They don't let the Iranians sneak into the whore houses. But that don't matter much because we know this world will be destroyed. God will set up His kingdom for a thousand years. So there's a slow train Coming, but it's bound to pick up speed."

*San Francisco, California, November 13<sup>th</sup> 1979*

"Satan's called the god of this world and as you look you see he really is god of this world. But for those of you who don't know... I'm curious to know how many of you don't know and how many of you know that Satan himself has been defeated at the cross. Does anybody know that? [Applause] Alright. At least we're not alone."

*Santa Monica, California, November 18<sup>th</sup> 1979*

"The world as we know it now is being destroyed. Sorry, but it's the truth. In a short time -- I don't know, in three years, maybe five years, could be ten years, I don't know -- there's gonna be a war. It's gonna be called the War of Armageddon. It's gonna be in the Middle East. Russia's gonna come down first. Anyway, we're not worried about that. We know there's gonna be a new kingdom set up in Jerusalem for a thousand years. That's where Christ will set up His Kingdom, as sure as you're standing there. It's gonna happen."

*Tempe, Arizona, November 25<sup>th</sup> 1979*

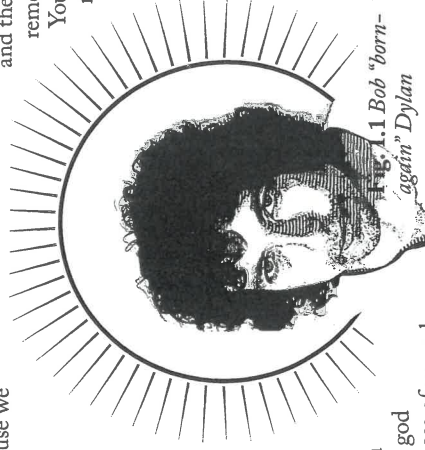
"Hmm, pretty rude bunch tonight eh? You all know how to be real rude! You know about the spirit of the Anti-Christ? Does anybody here know about that? Well, the spirit of the Anti-Christ is loose now."

*Tempe, Arizona, November 26<sup>th</sup> 1979*

"Don't matter how much money you got, there is only two kinds of people: There's saved people and there's lost people. Now remember that I told you that."

You may never see me again. I may never be through here again. You may not see me. Sometime down the line, you'll remember you heard it here -- that Jesus is Lord. And every knee shall bow!"

*Tempe, Arizona, November 26<sup>th</sup> 1979*



"No matter what you read in the newspaper, that's all deceit. The real truth is that he [Jesus] is coming back already. And you just watch your newspapers... maybe two years, maybe three years, five years from now, you just watch and see. Russia will come down and attack in the Middle East. China's got an army of two hundred million people, they're going to come down to the Middle East. There's going to be a war called the battle of Armageddon. Which is like some war you've never even dreamed about. And Christ will set up His kingdom. He will set up His kingdom and He will rule it from Jerusalem. Now I know, as far out as that might seem, this is what the Bible says."

*Tempe, Arizona, November 26<sup>th</sup> 1979*

"I told you 'The Times They Are A'Changing' and they did. I said the answer was 'Blowin' in the Wind' and it was. I'm telling you now Jesus is coming back, and he is!"

*Albuquerque, New Mexico, December 5<sup>th</sup> 1979*

## WIBBLING RIVALRY: THE BEST BITS

On April 7th 1994, the author of this book interviewed Liam and Noel Gallagher in a hotel in Glasgow. Two months before, Oasis had crash-landed in the music press when all of the band apart from Noel were detained on a ferry en route to Holland and sent back to the UK, resulting in the cancellation of a gig in Amsterdam. That incident sat at the heart of the conversation - the best bits of which were eventually released on a single that reached number 52 in the UK charts...



Fig 1.2 Noel and Liam Gallagher, 1994

**John Harris:** "How do you feel about the fact that, already, Oasis have attracted a reputation for being rock'n'roll animals?"

**Liam:** "I'm into it, me. I'm into it. But at the end of the day... I go home and get a clip off me mam, know what I mean? And I do. She clips me 'round the head and goes, 'What are you like, you little tinker?'"

**Noel:** "It's not a reputation, right, that I..."  
**L:** "I like the way it's bubbling up. It's reminding me of the Roses all over again. I like that, me. I want to get 2000 people in a nice fuckin' gauff who are there to see *me*, not fuckin' go..."

**N:** "Woah. Hang on a minute. That's not what he's on about."  
**L:** "He is."

**N:** "He's on about a reputation about getting thrown off fuckin' ferries."

**L:** "Yeah, but that's part of it, that's what..."  
**N:** "The thing about getting thrown off ferries - blah, blah, blah - and getting deported is summat that I'm not proud about..."

**L:** "Well I am, la."

**N:** "Yeah, alright. Well, if you're proud about getting thrown off ferries, then why don't you go and support West Ham and get the fuck out of my band and go and be a football hooligan, right? 'Cos we're musicians, right? We're not football hooligans."

**L:** "You're only gutted 'cos you was in bed fuckin' reading your fuckin' books..."

**N:** "No, not at all. Listen. No, listen. He says, right... Here's a quote for you from my manager, Marcus Russell, right..."

**L:** "He's a fuckin'... 'nother fuckin'..."

**N:** "Shut up you dick. Right. He gets off the

ferry after getting fuckin' deported. I'm left in Amsterdam with me dick out like a fuckin' spare prick at a fuckin' wedding..."

**L:** "It was a bad move, you know..."  
**N:** "Shut up! Shut up!... This lot think it's rock'n'roll to get thrown off a ferry... Do you know what my manager said to him? He said, 'Nah. Rock'n'roll is going to Amsterdam, doing your gig, playing your music... and coming back and saying you blew 'em away.' Not getting thrown off the ferry like some fuckin' scouse schlepper, being handcuffed. That's football hooliganism, and I won't stand for it. And listen: they all got fined a thousand pounds each."

**L:** "We didn't at all."

**N:** "Yes you fuckin' did."

**L:** "You can stick your thousands pounds right up your fuckin' arse 'till it comes out your fuckin' big toe."

*Noel goes to the toilet, and comes back, whereupon the conversation examines the connection between classic rock'n'roll groups and bad behaviour...*

**JH:** "Would the Stones have done anything without getting arrested and getting people's backs up?"

**L:** "No, would they fuck! That's why they were so good!"

**N:** "[*Super-indignant*] What? 'Cos they got arrested? Because the Rolling Stones got arrested they were a great rock'n'roll band? Fuck off! Bullshit! Bullshit!"

**L:** "No, but they had... summat else there."

**N:** "What? An edge? Is that what you're

saying? An edge?"

**L:** "No, they had a life, you dickhead. They had a life, man..."

**N:** "We've got a life! We've got a life!"

**L:** "Not if you start going on like that. [Begins to mince up and down bedroom] Do you want to walk around like that? Like that?"

**N:** "No, not at all... You think it's rock'n'roll to get thrown off a ferry, and it's not."

**L:** "I don't think it's rock'n' roll."

**N:** "That was your quote, you prick! That was your quote! It's rock'n'roll! It's rock'n'roll! That's what you said!"

**L:** "I was laughing about it. I'm into it.... It happened. That was reality, mate."

*Some minutes later...*

**N:** "Right. This band is about fuckin' music. It's not about getting thrown off fuckin' ferries. [To Liam] Why don't you go downstairs and smash the bar up and say you're the singer of Oasis?"

**L:** "Cos I don't want to. If I did, if I was gonna go down and smash the bar up, I'd do it and there's nothing would stop me."

**N:** "Then why don't you go and make a scene? Why don't you do a Keith Richards? Throw the TV out of the window!"

**L:** "Cos I'm not Keith Richards."

**N:** "Throw the TV out the window!"

**L:** "I don't want to do that. If I wanted to do it, I'd just go like that and do it, and do it. But I don't want to do that. I'm not about that."

**N:** "What are you about?"

**L:** "I'm about being... I'm about going down the fuckin'... I'm about... [takes long slug of gin and tonic] That's what I'm about."

**N:** "Right. That's what you're about. Right..."

**L:** "Sit down, man. You're getting into a state. You've had too many G&Ts. Sit the fuck down."

**N:** "See, you're not a spokesman for the band. L: 'I'm not - are you?'"

**N:** "Yeah, I am."

**L:** "Are you?"

**N:** "Yeah, I am."

**L:** "You might be in your little world, but as far as I'm concerned, if you think what I'm saying is bullshit, I think what you're saying is fuckin' bullshit, man."

**N:** "Right. Well, fine. But you don't speak for

the band."

**L:** "No, don't speak for the band."

**N:** "I do speak for the band."

**L:** "You do, yeah, because you're fuckin', yeah... I fuckin' speak for the band, I'm speaking now for the band. And I'm into it. I'm into all that fuckin' shit. [Referring to Noel] He's teetotal. He's a fuckin' priest. He was born to be a priest."

*Further debate about Liam's naughtiness ensues, until the inevitable mention of The Beatles...*

**L:** "It's not doing anyone any harm. That's just me. John Lennon used to fuckin' burn about doing little mad things, and that..."

**N:** "Do you know John Lennon?"

**L:** "Do you know him?"

**N:** "I don't, but do you?"

**L:** "Yeah."

**N:** "Well, you must be pretty old. How old are you? 21?"

**L:** "No. About fuckin' thousand and five fuckin' one."

**N:** "You're 22."

**L:** "No, I'm 21."

**N:** "Right. And remember, I watched you being born. And I don't even know John Lennon."

*Five or so minutes later...*

**JH:** "The Who hated each other as well."

**L:** "Yeah, well I hate this bastard."

**JH:** "Is that important to you? Is that what fires this band up?"

**L:** "Yeah. That's what it's all about. That's why we'll be the best band in the world, because I fuckin' hate that twat there... And I hope one day there's a release where I can smash fuck out of him, with a fuckin' Rickenbacker, right on his nose, and then he does the same to me, 'cos I think that we're stepping right up to it now. There's a fuckin' line there and we're right on the edge of it."

**JH:** "How often do you have arguments like this?"

**L:** "Every fuckin' day."

**N:** "Hourly."

**JH:** "Do you have any recurring dreams?"

**N:** "Yeah. Just the one."

**L:** "[Menacingly] I take over the band."



# LIVE AID: THE COMPLETE SETLIST

Come on! Union Of The Snake, Manateer, Don Quixote, Vienna – and, to be fair, the odd classic. July 13th 1985 went something like this...

[All times shown are in British Summer Time. Philadelphia is 5 hours behind]

12.00-12.02 **The Band Of The Coldstream Guards:** *Royal Salute, God Save The Queen*

12.02-12.16 **Status Quo:** *Rockin' All Over The World, Caroline, Don't Waste My Time*

12.20-12.35 **The Style Council:** *You're The Best Thing, Big Boss Groove, Internationalists, Walls Come Tumbling Down*

12.44-12.59 **The Boomtown Rats:** *I Don't Like Mondays, Drag Me Down, Rat Trap*

13.01-13.05 **Adam Ant:** *Vive Le Rock*

13.17-13.34

**Ultravox:** *Reap The Wild Wind, Dancing With Tears In My Eyes, One Small Day, Vienna*

13.46-14.03 **Spandau Ballet:** *Only When You Leave, Virgin, True*

[At this point, concert at JFK Stadium, Philadelphia begins. Key: PHL = Philadelphia, LDN = London]

PHIL 13.51 **Bernard Watson** [an 18 year-old unknown from Miami Beach who persuaded promoter Bill Graham to let him open the show, after sleeping outside the stadium for a week]: *All I Really Want To Do, Interview*

PHIL 14.01-14.08 **Joan Baez:** *Amazing Grace, We Are The World*

LDN 14.07-14.11 **Elvis Costello:** *All You Need Is Love*

PHIL 14.10-14.21 **The Hooters:** *And We Danced, All You Zombies*

LDN 14.22-14.40 **Nik Kershaw:** *Wide Boy, Don Quixote, The Riddle, Wouldn't It Be Good*

PHIL 14.32-14.41 **The Four Tops:** *Shake Me, Wake Me (When It's Over), Bernadette, Motown medley: It's The Same Old Song, Reach Out I'll Be There, I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)*

PHIL 14.45-14.53 **Billy Ocean:** *Caribbean Queen, Loverboy*

LDN 14.53-15.09

**Sade:** *Why Can't We Live Together, Your Love Is King, Is It A Crime*

PHIL 14.55-15.10

**Black Sabbath:** *Children Of The Grave, Iron Man, Paranoid*

PHIL 15.12-15.19 **Run DMC:** *Jam Master Jay, King Of Rock*

LDN 15.18-15.47: **Sting & Phil Collins** [with **Branford Marsalis**]: *Roxanne, Driven To Tears, Against All Odds (Take A Look At Me Now), Message In A Bottle, In The Air Tonight, Long Long Way To Go, Every Breath You Take*

[Whereupon **Phil Collins** is transported to Heathrow for a flight to Philadelphia, in a helicopter piloted by **Noel Edmonds**]

PHIL 15.27-15.37 **Rick Springfield:** *Love Somebody, State Of The Art, Human Touch*

PHIL 15.47-15.57 **REO Speedwagon:** *Can't Fight This Feeling, Roll With The Changes*

LDN 15.49-15.54 **Howard Jones:** *Hide And Seek*

LDN 16.08-16.26 **Bryan Ferry** [with band including **David Gilmour**]: *Sensation, Boys And Girls, Slave To Love, Jealous Guy*

PHIL 16.12-16.28 **Crosby, Stills & Nash:** *Southern Cross, Teach Your Children, Suite: Judy Blue Eyes*

PHIL 16.29-16.44 **Judas Priest:** *Living After Midnight, The Green Manalishi (With The Two-Prong Crown), You've Got Another Thing Comin'*

LDN: 16.40-17.01 **Paul Young:** *Do They Know It's Christmas [a capella excerpt], Come Back And Stay, That's The Way Love Is [with Alison Moyet], Every Time You Go Away*

PHIL 17.01-17.18

**Bryan Adams:** *Kids Wanna Rock, Summer Of '69, Tears Are Not Enough, Cuts Like A Knife*

LDN 17.19-

17.39 **U2:** *Sunday Bloody Sunday, Bad [including legendary 'Bono gets stuck in crowd' incident, and snatches of Satellite Of Love, Ruby Tuesday, Sympathy For The Devil and Walk On The Wild Side]*



Fig 2.2 Bono, pre-'stuck in crowd' interlude

PHIL 17.39-17.55 **The Beach Boys:**

*California Girls, Help Me, Rhonda, Wouldn't It Be Nice, Good Vibrations, Surfer's USA*

LDN 18.00-18.19 **Dire Straits:** *Money For Nothing [with Sting], Sultans Of Swing*

PHIL 18.26-18.44 **George Thorogood & The Destroyers:** *Who Do You Love [with Bo Diddley], The Sky Is Crying, Madison Blues [with Albert Collins]*

LDN 18.41 – 19.02 **Queen:** *Bohemian Rhapsody, Radio Ga Ga [followed by Freddie Mercury's 'Day-oh' audience participation segment], Hammer To Fall, Crazy Little Thing Called Love, We Will Rock You, We Are The Champions*

[After which, Bob Geldof, impatient with the £1.2 million raised in the UK thus far, appears on the BBC's coverage and becomes impatient with co-host David Hepworth's suggestion that they remind viewers of a postal address for donations before repeating the relevant telephone numbers. The resulting quote – "Fuck the address, let's get the numbers" – fuses with his instruction to "give us the money NOW", and enters the popular consciousness as "Give us the fucking money".]

PHIL 19.05-19.21 **Simple Minds:** *Ghost Dancing, Don't You (Forget About Me), Promised You A Miracle*

LDN 19.23-19.41 **David Bowie:** *TVC 15, Rebel Rebel, Modern Love, Heroes*

[Whereupon a video of the Ethiopian famine is shown, soundtracked by **The Cars' Drive**]

PHIL 19.41-19.56

**The Pretenders:** *Time The Avenger, Message Of Love, Stop Your Sobbing, Back On The Chain Gang, Middle Of The Road*

LDN 19.59-20.21 **The Who:** [During first two songs, BBC coverage interrupted] *My Generation, Pinball Wizard, Love Reign O'er Me, Won't Get Fooled Again*

PHIL 20.21-20.40 **Santana:** *Brotherhood, Primavera Invasion, Open Invitation, Medley: By The Pool, Right Now [with Pat Metheny]*

LDN 20.50-21:15 **Elton John:** *I'm Still Standing, Bennie And The Jets, Rocket Man, Don't Go Breaking My Heart [with Kiki Dee], Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me [with Wham!], Can I Get A Witness*

PHIL 20.57-21:08 **Ashford & Simpson:** *Solid, Reach Out And Touch (Somebody's Hand) [with Teddy Pendergrass]*

PHL 21:27-21:47 **Madonna: Holiday, Into The Groove, Love Makes The World Go Round** [with the *Thompson Twins*]

LDN 21:47-21:51 **Freddie Mercury & Brian May: Is This The World We Created?**

LDN 21:51-21:57 **Paul McCartney: Let It Be** [song goes on for some time, and includes infamous 'broken microphone' interlude. Also features impromptu backing vocals/shouting by **Bob Geldof, Alison Moyet, Pete Townshend and David Bowie**]

LDN 21:57-22:02 **Assembled cast: Do They Know It's Christmas?**

[Whereupon London concert closes, and everything that follows is from Philadelphia]

22:02-22:20 **Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers: American Girl, The Waiting, Rebels, Refugee**



**Fig.2.3** Run DMC's Jam Master Jay (RIP)

22:30-22:34 **Kenny Loggins: Footloose**

22:39-22:56 **The Cars: You Might Think, Drive, Just What I Needed, Heartbeat City**

23:06-23:27 **Neil Young: Sugar Mountain, The Needle And the Damage Done, Helpless, Nothing Is Perfect, Powderfinger**

23:42-23:52 **The Power Station: Murderess, Get It On**

00:21-00:33 **Thompson Twins: Hold Me Now, Revolution** [with *Madonna, Billy Idol's* guitarist *Steve Stevens* and *Nile Rodgers*]

00:38-00:55 **Eric Clapton** [with band including **Phil Collins**, freshly arrived via Concorde]: *White Room, She's Waiting, Layla*

01:00-01:10 **Phil Collins: Against All Odds (Take a Look at Me Now), In the Air Tonight**

01:10-01:32 **Led Zeppelin** [with drummer **Tony Thompson**, bassist **Paul Martinez**, and **Phil Collins** on drums, who conspicuously introduces each of them by name, avoiding mention of the 'L' and 'Z' words]: *Rock and Roll, Whole Lotta Love, Stairway To Heaven*

01:39-01:45 **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young: Only Love Can Break Your Heart, Daylight Again**

01:46-02:08 **Duran Duran: A View to a Kill, Union of the Snake, Save A Prayer, The Reflex**

02:20-02:40 **Patti LaBelle: New Attitude, Imagine, Forever Young, Stir It Up, Over The Rainbow, Why Can't I Get It Over**

02:50-03:12 **Hall & Oates: Out Of Touch, Maneater, Get Ready** [with **Eddie Kendricks of The Temptations**]  
 Airt Too Proud to Beg"  
 [with **David Ruffin of The Temptations**],  
 The Way You Do the  
 Things You Do, My Girl  
 [latter two songs with  
 Kendricks and Ruffin  
 together]

03:15-03:35 **Mick Jagger: Lonely At The Top, Just Another Night** [both with **Daryl Hall**],  
 Miss You [with **Hall & Oates, Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin**].  
*State Of Shock, It's Only Rock 'n Roll* [last two songs with **Tina Turner**]

03:39-03:53 **Bob Dylan, Keith Richards & Ronnie Wood** [during which Dylan utters the oft-misquoted words, "I hope that some of the money that's raised for people in Africa... maybe they could just take a little bit of it... and use it, say, to pay the mortgages on some of the farms that the farmers here owe to the banks.": *Ballad Of Hollis Brown, When the Ship Comes In, Blowin' in the Wind*

03:55-04:05 **Assembled cast, led by Lionel Richie** [with **Harry Belafonte, Cher, Sheena Easton**, obligatory children's choir and incredible ad-libbed warbling from **Patti LaBelle**]: *We Are the World*

# Everybody talk about...prop music!

Classic on-stage visual aids, from hydraulic willies to motherships

## Funkadelic's Mothership 1976

Thanks to a production budget of \$275,000, the P-Funk Earth Tour by George Clinton's Parliament-Funkadelic collective introduced US black music to the same OTT aesthetics as stadium rock. By way of enacting the themes of Parliament's Mothership Connection LP, a flying saucer would descend on the stage, and Clinton would emerge, recast as "Dr Funkenstein". And fair play to him: it must have been a bit more exciting than, say, Razorlight.

## Pink Floyd's pig 1977

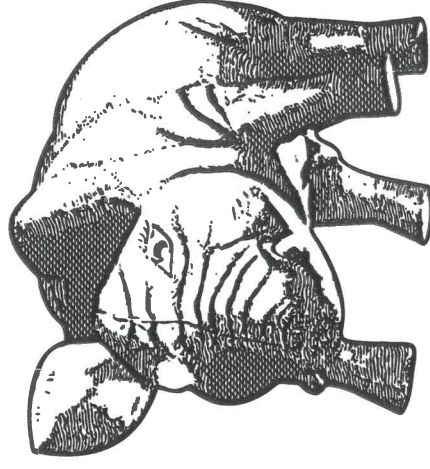
The sleeve of the Animals LP featured a giant pig hovering over Battersea power station (during an aborted photo-shoot, it drifted off over the Home Counties, but that's another story). For the tour that followed it, the Floyd took along a 30x15 foot helium-filled swine. After Roger Waters departed in 1985, he demanded \$800 per show for the use of the original pig, only to be outmanoeuvred: his former colleagues slipped free of copyright by adding a nice pair of testicles.

## Kraftwerk's robots 1978

While making *The Man Machine* - which featured the classic song *The Robots* - the Werk commissioned their own doppelgangers from a Munich mannequin firm. They were taken on the road in 1981, having spent a few years being used for photo shoots. Record company staff later recalled having to buy plane seats for the dummies, and for at least one early '80s show, the band bought seats for them in the front row. "Yes," commented senior Kraftwerker Ralf Hutter, "they were quite pleased with our performance." Ker-azy guys!

## Motorhead's bomber 1979

Everybody's favourite raddled and supercharged metal trio flagged up their 1979 album *Bomber* with a forty-foot aluminium replica of a Heinkel He 111, a model much beloved of the Luftwaffe (and thus in keeping with bassist/singer Lemmy's rum fondness for Nazi memorabilia). Its currents whereabouts are unknown, though Lemmy claims that it's now "holding up a shed in Diss [in Norfolk]."



**Fig.2.4** Pink Floyd's pig (non-testicular version)

## AC/DC's cannons 1981

Following their mind-bogglingly successful comeback album *Back In Black*, the legendary Anglo-Scots-Australian hard rockists came up with *For Those About To Rock (We Salute You)*, whose title track approximated the sound of "a 21-gun salute". For the accompanying gigs, they commissioned six stage cannons, which joined the huge bell used during *Hells Bells* - rooted in the Newcastle pubs beloved of singer/shrieker Brian Johnson, thus was born the "Cannon and Bell" tour (Note to younger readers: it's a reference to a long-lost Northern comedy duo; ask your dad).

## The Beastie Boys' penis 1987

A glorious example of the absurd joys of British life in the 1980s: facing the imminent arrival of the UK of three middle-class Jewish boys from New York, the red-top press rebranded them as apocalyptically anti-social louts, and rent-a-quote Conservative MPs obediently worked themselves into a right old lather. The focus of much of their ire was a vast mechanical male member, unleashed from a black box during renditions of *Fight For Your Right To Party*. "There were debates in parliament," Michael 'Mike D' Diamond later marvelled. "I've always had this image of people in wigs discussing a hydraulic penis."



## Delay, distortion, fuzz and "flange"

Rock's answer to submarine science: effects pedals, and the guitarists who've used them

### Fuzz

Among the first mass-marketed effects pedals was the Fuzz-tone, manufactured by Gibson guitars offshoot Maestro circa 1964. "Guttural, mellow, raucous, tender, raw – the 'fuzz' effect," raved the adverts, and the world was decisively turned on by Keith Richards' use of it on (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction (1965). Note also the Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face, invented in the UK, introduced in 1966, and much loved by that godlike effects king Jimi Hendrix (much more of whom below).

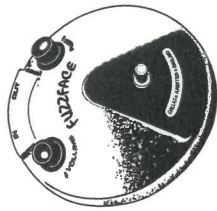


Fig 3.1 The Fuzz Face

### Univibe

Introduced in 1968 by the Univox company, aimed at replicating the revolving-speaker sound beloved of psychedelics, and housed in a big old sheet-metal box. Those in the know refer to its sound as a "pulsating swirl"; for evidence, listen to **Jimi Hendrix's** Machine Gun (1970) and out-there reading of The Star Spangled Banner (1969). Guitar-shop regulars take note: the same essential sound is delivered by any number of Phaser (or phase-shifter) units.

### Flanger

Amazing rock fact: the name of this effect is traceable to **John Lennon** asking Beatles producer **George Martin** how he achieved the trippy effect on his vocals that came from an effect simply known as Automatic Double Tracking. "It's very simple," Martin replied. "We take the original image and we split it through a double-bifurcated splashing flange with double negative feedback." Ergo the phaser-like flanger, whereby the sound of a guitar – or anything else – moves in and out of sync with itself, creating a queasy kind of sonic wobble. To instantly understand, have a listen to **The Clash's** Lost In The Supermarket (1979), and a **Mick Jones** guitar part done on an MXR Flanger, introduced in 1977.



Fig 3.2 George Martin

### Chorus

A chip off the flanging block, whose lush, aquatic tone defined the prevailing guitar sound of the early to mid 1980s. The first proper example was the Boss CE-1 Chorus Ensemble, introduced in 1976, and showcased by **Andy Summers** on such **Police** hits as Message In A Bottle (1979). Chorus was/is also much beloved of such guitarists as **The Pretenders' James Honeyman-Scott**, **The Cult's Billy Duffy**, **The Cure's Robert Smith**, and **The Smiths' Johnny Marr**. **Kurt Cobain** was also partial, as proved by, say, Nirvana's Come As You Are (1991).

### Wah-wah

This one's all about a "sweepable peaking filter", though non-scientists might like to think of it as a way of loading a guitar sound with either treble or bass, using a foot pedal (which is not quite right, but almost there). Whatever, the Clyde McCoy Wah-Wah (1966), Vox Wah (1967) and Cry Baby (1968) quickly became truly iconic – by way of a reminder, listen to **Hendrix's** Woodoo Child (Slight Return) (1968), **Isaac Hayes' Theme From Shaft** (1971), or **The Stone Roses' Fools' Gold** (1989). Oh, and one other thing: **The Band's** Up On Cripple Creek (1969) was the first recorded example of a keyboard being stuck through a wah-wah unit.

### Octave divider

**Hendrix** strikes again. In 1967, his effects guru Roger Mayer – who, somewhat fascinatingly, started out doing secret work on the science of submarine warfare for the British navy – came up with the Octavia, a device that processed his guitar signal to add another octave up, a trick

you can hear on the solos in Purple Haze (1967). Copycat pedals soon followed, and though the effect eventually fell out of fashion, it was revived by **Jack White**: it's an octave-divider than makes his guitar sound like a bass on **The White Stripes' Seven Nation Army** (2003).

### Overdrive/Distortion

Essentially, two ways of making even the most bog-standard guitar-and-amp set-ups approximate the sound of an overheating speaker being taken to within an inch of its life by a sonic lunatic (or something). The old-school king of the first kind of device was the Ibanez TS-808 Tube Screamer, introduced in 1979, and favoured by the Texan blues-rock god **Stevie Ray Vaughan**. The second is exemplified by the thrillingly simple Turbo RAT pedal (1989), invented in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and favoured by the likes of **The Pixies' Frank Black** and ex-Blur fella **Graham Coxon** (as well as bassist **Alex James**, who put his bass through one on 1997's Song 2).

### Delay

Before the late 1970s, guitarists who fancied using echo relied on bulky inventions like the Maestro Echoplex, forever associated with the British folk-rock virtuoso **John Martyn**. Around the turn of the decade, however, there came a new breed of analog delay pedals, quickly followed by digital devices – and thus was born the trademark sound of U2's Dave **The Edge** Evans, minted on The Unforgettable Fire (1984). Aspiring U2 tribute bands and people who want to torture their neighbours with multiple renditions of Where The Streets Have No Name should take note: his secret was the Korg SDD-3000, introduced in 1982.

### Talk box

Not nice at all. You know it when you hear it: via a plastic tube, the guitar cross-fertilised with a human voice, to make it sound a bit like a monster from Dr. Who. The definitive device was the Heil Talk Box, the work of a renowned US sound engineer named Bob Heil, who donated one of the first to the soft-rock figuralhead **Peter Frampton**. It was thus used on Frampton Comes Alive (1976) – and, thanks to Frampton's influence, **Bon Jovi's** Living On A Prayer (1986). Hell awaits, we're saying.

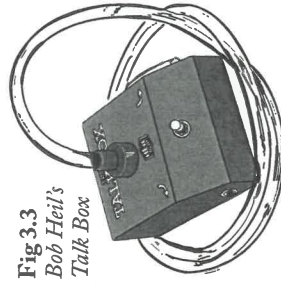


Fig 3.3 Bob Heil's Talk Box

## Putting it all together the Jimi Hendrix way

The virtuoso's onstage set-up, circa 1969: four pedals, one guitar, and three stacks

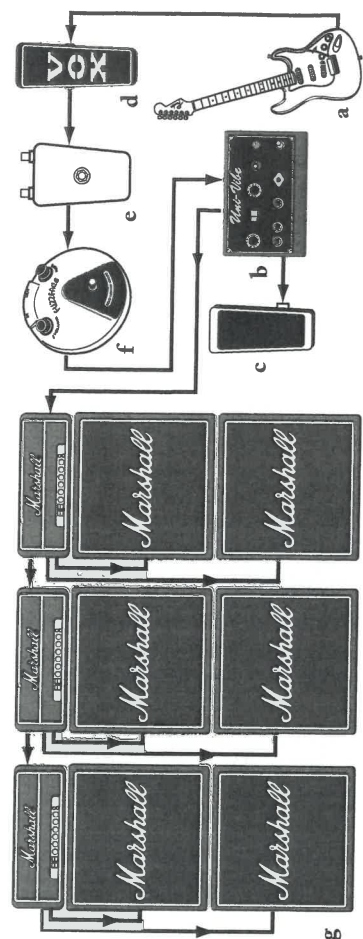
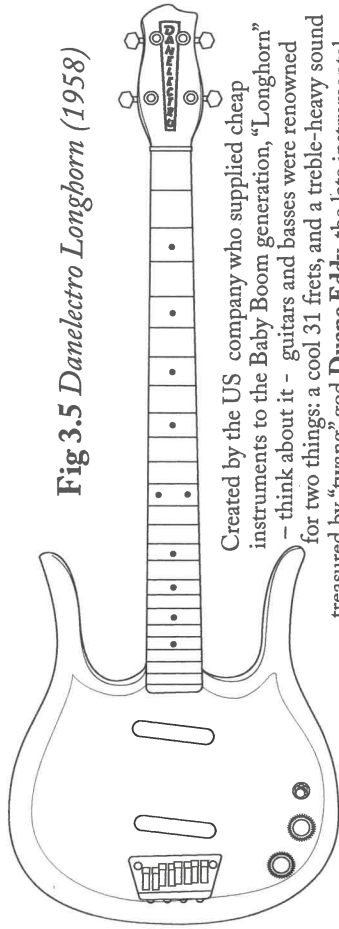


Fig 3.4 a Fender Stratocaster, b Univibe Univibe, c Univibe foot controller, d Vox Wah, e Roger Mayer Octavia, f Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face, g Marshall Stacks

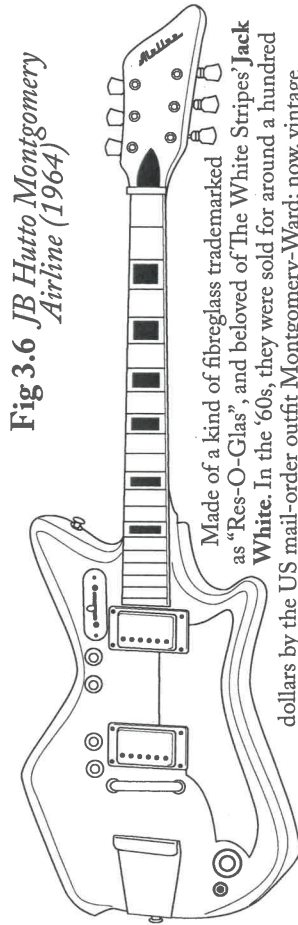
# THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

Your Stratocasters and Les Pauls might look good, but some people will always want to step outside the world of Fenders, Gibsons and Rickenbackers, and put an accent on the guitar as an oddly-contoured, possibly futuristic statement of individuality. It's been a gambit favoured by no end of guitarists, from Bo Diddley, through Brian Jones, and on in turn to scores of Heavy Metalers. Oh, and one other thing: some allegedly 'classic' models were simply too ugly to print. Here, one thinks of the very '80s-esque Steinberger line of guitars and basses, essentially headless necks clamped to small black boxes, enthusiastically taken up by the likes of Genesis's Mike Rutherford and Curt Smith out of Tears For Fears. They have not endured, and we do not want to encourage a comeback.



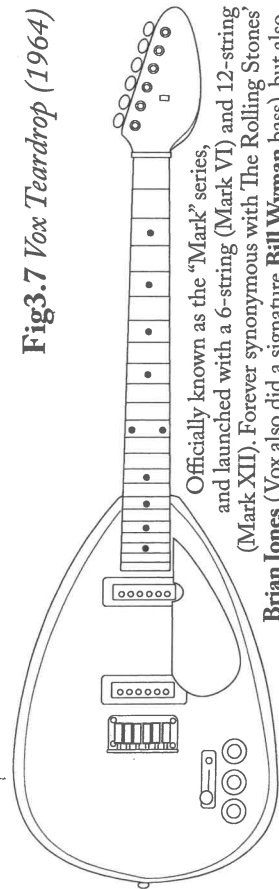
**Fig 3.5 Danelectro Longhorn (1958)**

Created by the US company who supplied cheap instruments to the Baby Boom generation, "Longhorn" – think about it – guitars and basses were renowned for two things: a cool 31 frets, and a treble-heavy sound treasured by "twang" god **Duane Eddy**, the late instrumental virtuoso **Link Wray**, and **The Who's John Entwistle**.



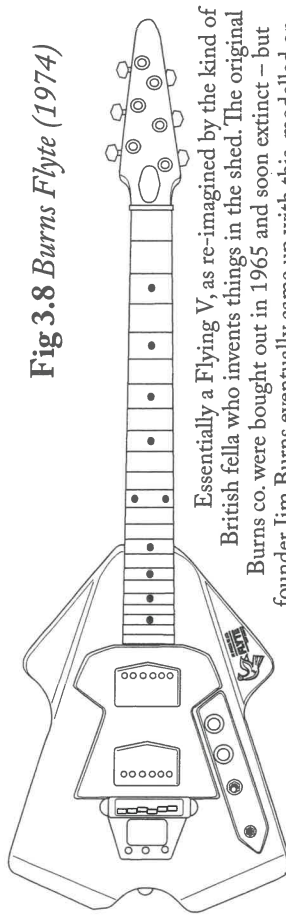
**Fig 3.6 JB Hutto Montgomery Airline (1964)**

Made of a kind of fibreglass trademarked as "Res-O-Glas", and beloved of **The White Stripes' Jack White**. In the '60s, they were sold for around a hundred dollars by the US mail-order outfit Montgomery-Ward; now, vintage models go for as much as \$2000. The "JB Hutto" name was coined in tribute to a South Carolina-born bluesman and slide guitar virtuoso who died in 1983.



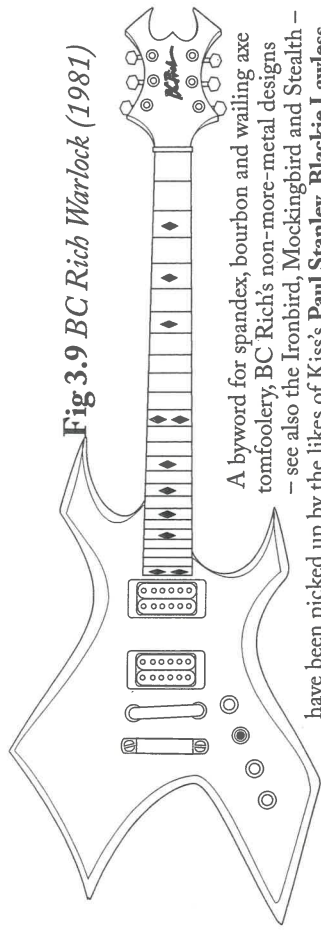
**Fig 3.7 Vox Teardrop (1964)**

Officially known as the "Mark" series, and launched with a 6-string (Mark VI) and 12-string (Mark XII). Forever synonymous with **The Rolling Stones' Brian Jones** (Vox also did a signature **Bill Wyman** bass), but also played by **The Beat's Dave Wakeling**, **Tom Petty**, and Coldplay's **Chris Martin**.



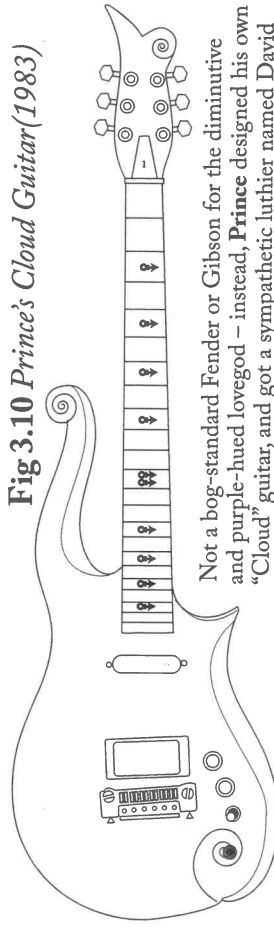
**Fig 3.8 Burns Flyte (1974)**

Essentially a Flying V, as re-imagined by the kind of British fella who invents things in the shed. The original Burns co. were bought out in 1965 and soon extinct – but founder **Jim Burns** eventually came up with this, modelled on Concorde and endorsed by **Marc Bolan** and Slade's **Dave Hill**. It didn't last.



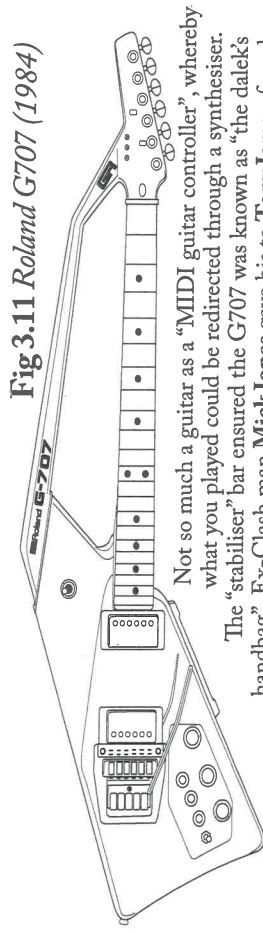
**Fig 3.9 BC Rich Warlock (1981)**

A byword for spandex, bourbon and wailing axe tomfoolery, BC Rich's non-more-metal designs – see also the Ironbird, Mockingbird and Stealth – have been picked up by the likes of Kiss's **Paul Stanley**, **Blackie Lawless** from W.A.S.P. and Motley Crue's **Nikki Sixx**. We like the Warlock best, thanks to 1) A proud endorsement from Slayer's **Kerry King**, 2) Adverts featuring a skull in a wig, and 3) The name.



**Fig 3.10 Prince's Cloud Guitar (1983)**

Not a bog-standard Fender or Gibson for the diminutive and purple-hued lovegod – instead, **Prince** designed his own "Cloud" guitar, and got a sympathetic luthier named **David Husain** to build him four. More were subsequently made and sold through Prince's two shops in Minneapolis and London, before the guitar farm Schecter produced replicas. They're very small, apparently.



**Fig 3.11 Roland G707 (1984)**

Not so much a guitar as a "MIDI guitar controller", whereby what you played could be redirected through a synthesiser. The "stabiliser" bar ensured the G707 was known as "the daleks handbag". Ex-Clash man **Mick Jones** gave his to **Tony James**, founder of '80s damp squib **Sigue Sigue Sputnik**, which may say it all.



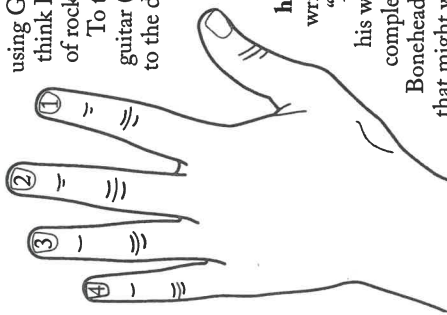
# Teach yourself guitar in an hour

To start, a quick word from **Jason Pierce**, the chief creative force of **Spiritualized**, the art-rock project who released their first work in 1990, and are still with us. "The first bunch of songs I wrote all used E," he once said. "Then I started throwing in an A for some songs, then I started using G because my voice changed, and sometimes I'll add in a D if I think I need to. There aren't any rules, but those four chords cover most of rock'n'roll."

To take your first steps as a guitarist, you first need to tune your guitar (google "guitar tuner", and go from there). Then, give numbers to the digits of your fingering hand as demonstrated in this illustration, which will allow you to understand chord diagrams. After that, steel yourself for a good deal of pain, which can be played by regularly dipping your fingers in white spirit – and then bear in mind this story about the ex-Oasis guitarist **Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs**, retold in the Oasis biography *What's The Story*, written by their one-time Head Of Security, Ian Robertson.

"After a show in LA in February '95, some guitar fetishist bluffed his way into the dressing room and began to offer his opinions, completely unsought: 'Man, all you played was, like, A, C, D or G.' Bonehead's reply could only be construed as helpful. 'Listen, dickhead, that might well be all I played, but I'm the one playing it, I'm the one in the band, and you paid to see me do it.'"

Fig 4.1 The key to the crucial chord-code

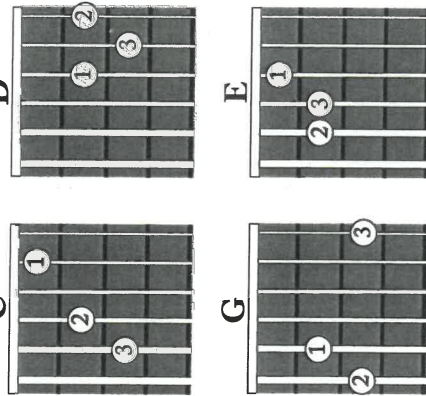


## The Jason Pierce/Bonehead chord guide



Fig 4.2 Pierce, Bonehead, and the big five shapes

To rock out in a minimalist style according to the blueprint explained above, here's what you need – and when it comes to some classic songs, even some of this is surplus to requirements. The Velvet Underground's **Heroin**, for example, uses only D and G, with the open D string (third from the bottom) used as an ongoing drone.



## The three-chord trick

Just about all blues songs and most classic rock'n'roll tunes are built around the classic three-chord progression. In the key of A, you go like this: play A for four bars, then D for two bars, then A again for two bars, then E for one bar, D for one bar, and then back to A. In the key of D, the same pattern runs thus: D-G-D-A-G-D. This thrillingly simple idea will enable you to have a go at any number of songs, from **Hound Dog** and **Blue Suede Shoes**, through Bob Dylan's **Subterranean Homesick Blues**, to Led Zeppelin's **Rock'n'Roll**.

## The bar chord

In fact, Bonehead's real speciality – as with a lot of guitarists – was the bar chord, a shape you can shift up and down the neck, allowing you to play just about any major-key chord you like (though it'll initially be very painful). Moreover, if you hold down the bar chord shape and then lift off finger number two, you're into minor chords, which opens up a whole new universe. At the seventh fret, for example, you'll get Bminor, which fits into the key of D, and another classic chord progression: D-B minor-G-A, which is the basis of The Undertones' **Teenage Kicks**.

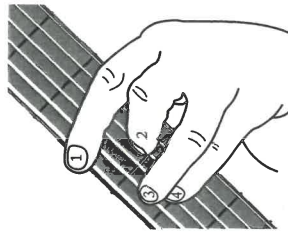


Fig 4.3 The bar chord

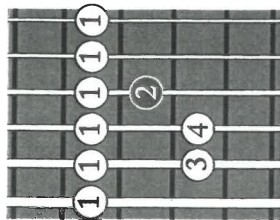


Fig 4.4 The diagram

## Rhythm guitar for the lazy

But never mind all that. Using the same anywhere-along-the-neck principle of the bar chord, you can actually play rhythm guitar using just two fingers (numbers 1 and 3, ideally) and a shape that suffices for the chug-chug sound of a lot of punk, hard rock and heavy metal, and – once you've got a distortion pedal – big, evil-sounding riffs, a la **Tony Iommi** from **Black Sabbath** (who was forced into this approach by an industrial accident that affected fingers 2 and 3). Also, you can copy the same two-fingered shape on to the A and D strings, and the D and G strings. With some thought, this thrillingly basic idea will enable you to approximate any number of classics, from Deep Purple's guitar-shop standard **Smoke On The Water** to the Sex Pistols' **God Save The Queen**. Even better, by using finger number 4 to alternately fret a note two frets above finger number 3, you'll get into the propulsive "der-ner-ner" riff that began with **Chuck Berry**, and has defined nearly four decades of music by the legendarily primitive **Status Quo**.

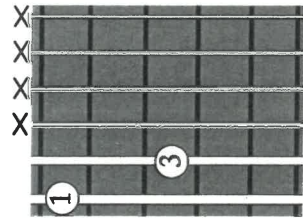


Fig 4.5 Iommi shape

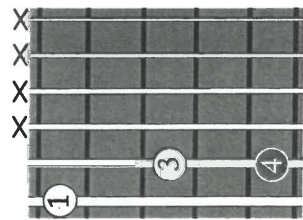


Fig 4.6 The key to Quo

## One last trick: suspended 4th chords

Again, using the same principle as the bar chord, there's an alternate shape for major chords in which you only play the guitar's top four strings, and finger number 4 is freed up. You can then use that digit for a note one fret above finger number two, which creates what's known as a suspended fourth (or "sus4") chord. With about two minutes of experimentation, you'll then quickly unlock the basic riff from **Pinball Wizard** by The Who, The Rolling Stones' **Start Me Up**, Free's **All Right Now** and The Cult's **Love Removal Machine**.

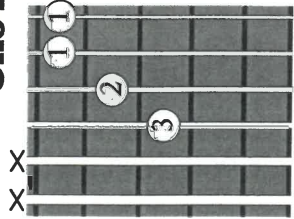


Fig 4.7 Stage One

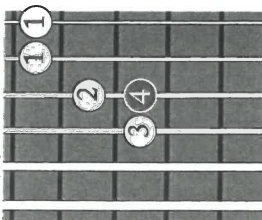


Fig 4.8 Stage Two: eureka!

So there you have it: now go and form a band.



# "You write 'em - I'll sell 'em"

Glam-rock godheads Slade, and their very sartorial sub-plot

## Dave Hill

"It was all about major impact"

What grim old times the early-to-mid '70s were: strikes, power-cuts, oil price hikes, only three channels of TV, and a quite unnecessary amount of bad music (e.g. Yes). It was fortunate, then, that a slew of glam rock icons took it upon themselves to lighten up an otherwise tiresome era, not only with some thrilling records, but dizzily ludicrous clothes – and on both scores, no-one did it better than Wolverhampton gonzo-rock quartet Slade, the creators of a run of 12 top 5 hits that stretched from 1971 to 1974.

On the costume front, their key weapon was lead guitarist Dave Hill, who pioneered one of the strangest haircuts in rock history (effectively two styles on one head – as he once put it, "shorter fringe, long sides – it allowed

me to put a bit of glitter on my forehead"), and brought in two Midlands design students called Steve and Barbara

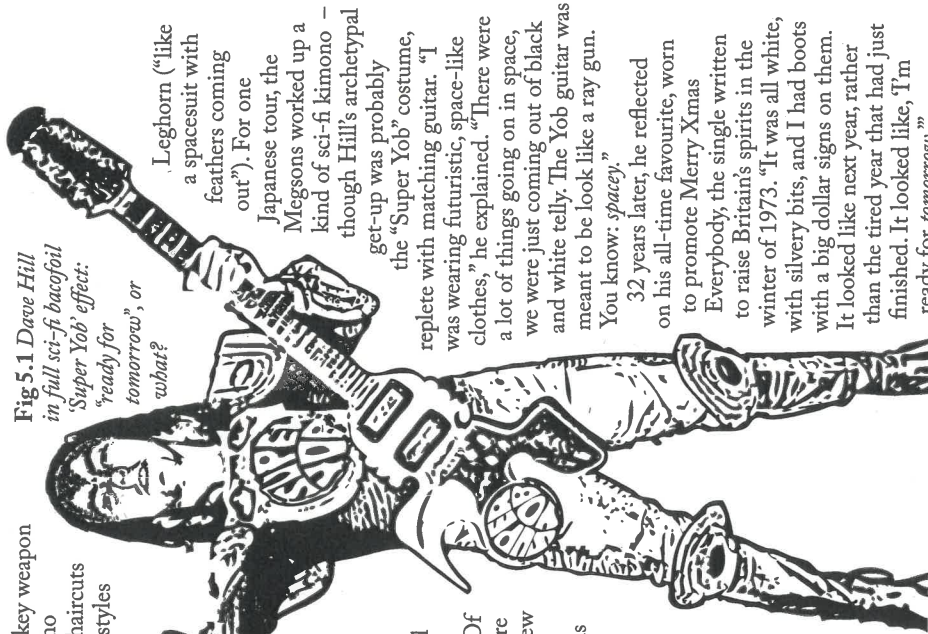
Megson to work on some truly mind-boggling attire. "It was all about major impact to me," he later recalled. "If I was on Top Of The Pops, I was going to be more noticed than anybody else. I knew what I was doing."

"We didn't know what he was coming up with next, which was part of the fun of it," says singer-guitarist Noddy (aka Neville) Holder. "Usually, the unveiling wouldn't be at a gig. He'd have to test them on TV first, because they might be too cumbersome. Top Of The Pops was where it happened. He used to go to the toilet in the dressing room. He didn't want us to see it going on a bit at a time; we had to see it

as the audience would see it. So he'd go in the bog to change, and he'd be in there for hours at a time. You could hear all the taps running, and all this scuffling about. But nobody was allowed in until he'd finished. And then things would quieten down, and we knew he was almost ready. We'd all shout, 'Come on, Hi! Reveal all!' And he'd come out in whatever was the new thing."

Among the outfits Hill premiered were costumes known by his colleagues as The Metal Nun ("a Cleopatra headpiece with a gown," as Holder recalls), and Foghorn

Fig 5.1 Dave Hill in full sci-fi bacofail 'Super Yob' effect: 'ready for tomorrow', or what?



Leghorn ("like a spacesuit with feathers coming out"). For one

Megsons worked up a kind of sci-fi kimono – though Hill's archetypal get-up was probably the "Super Yob" costume, replete with matching guitar. "I was wearing futuristic, space-like clothes," he explained. "There were a lot of things going on in space, we were just coming out of black and white telly. The Yob guitar was meant to be look like a ray gun. You know: *spacey*."

32 years later, he reflected on his all-time favourite, worn to promote Merry Xmas Everybody, the single written to raise Britain's spirits in the winter of 1973. "It was all white, with silvery bits, and I had boots with a big dollar signs on them. It looked like next year, rather than the tired year that had just finished. It looked like, 'I'm ready for tomorrow.'"

## Noddy Holder

"Like having a dozen torches on my head"



Fig 5.2 Noddy Holder, Coachman's hat and glued-on mirrors, gaping crowd and mirrors presumably out of shot

The answer came on a visit to London's groovesome clothing emporium Kensington Market, where Holder found a second-hand Coachman's hat. Whereas a bog-standard top hat has curved edges, this one's sides were flat, so he could glue circular mirrors around it and create nothing short of "a giant mirrorball".

"It was fate," he later recalled. "It was bloody heavy, but it worked. We had this pin-point

spotlight; at a given point in the show, we'd drop all the lights, and it would just go, 'Zap!' A pin-point spot would hit the hat, and all these beams of light would go out. It was like having a dozen torches on my head. It was just mind-blowing. Onstage, you could hear the crowd gasp."

## Jim Lea

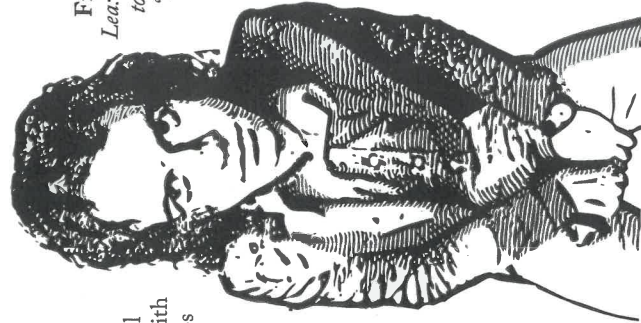
"We can't do this – it's stupid"

One member of Slade, unfortunately, thought that sci-fi kimonos, feathered spacesuits and mirror hats were rather getting in the way. Drummer Don Powell – who was fond of garish cat-suits – just about got with the glam programme, but as Slade footage and photos reveal, bassist, violinist and co-songwriter Jim Lea, known by the band's road crew as "the Midlands Misery", was having none of it.

"I always thought the wacky side would haunt us," he says now. "It made us look as if we weren't serious about what we were doing. And it got wackier and wackier. I walked out of photo sessions – it was, 'Fuck that.' So we'd end up with one shot with Dave in his chicken suit, and one without."

Jim's argument was: "Well, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd don't do that," says Noddy Holder. And I used to say to him, 'But we're not Led Zeppelin or Pink Floyd.' This is Slade!" One apocryphal Slade story has Dave Hill turning up at Top Of The Pops in another insane creation, Lea expressing his disapproval, and Hill uttering the immortal words, "You write 'em – I'll sell 'em."

Fig 5.3 Jim Lea: the none-too-chuffed "Midlands Misery"





# PINK FLOYD: FRIENDS OF DOROTHY?

## A guide to the great Dark Side Of The Moon/Wizard Of Oz synchronicity mystery

"Dark Side Of The Moon was meant to be simple and direct," said Pink Floyd's David Gilmour, some thirty years after the release of the band's most revered album. "Then letters started pouring in saying, 'This means this, and this means that'... and then you get The Wizard Of Oz coming along to stun you. Someone once showed me how that worked, or didn't work. How did I feel? Weary."

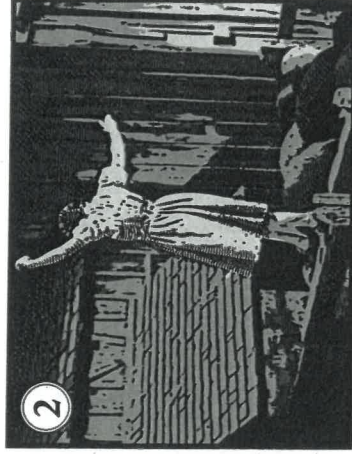
As with so many of the grim aspects of modern living, blame the internet. Though the origins of the idea are lost to history, in 1994, subscribers to the Pink Floyd newsgroup alt.

music.pink-floyd began discussing the supposed synchronicity between Dark Side and The Wizard Of Oz. Not entirely surprisingly, the so-called Dark Side Of The Rainbow "theory" rapidly gripped the imaginations of box-bedroom conspiracy theorists (and weed casualties) all over the world, and despite countless denials from the band, it refused to die. So, here it is: start up the DVD, let loose the album on the third roar of the MGM lion, and you'll be transported to the intersection between the Moon and Oz. Or there again, maybe you won't...



1

The intrigue begins in the first verse of Breathe. "Look around," go the lyrics, at the exact point(ish) that - and get this! - Judy Garland looks around. Creepy, or what?



2

Breathe's penultimate line is "Balanced on the biggest wave", and it synchronises with Judy/Dorothy balancing on a fence - which is not anything like a wave. But bear with us...



3

Nothing doing as far as the next track (On The Run) is concerned, but the chimes that precede Time go off just as Mrs. Gulch appears on her bike, and stop when she gets off!



4

Time briefly reprises the verse melody from Breathe, and includes the line "Home, home again". At this point, Professor Marvel tells Dorothy she should go home.



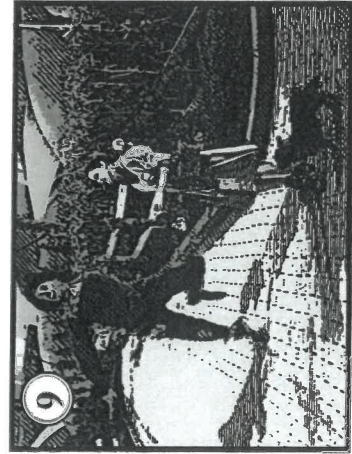
5

But enough scepticism. This is our favourite bit of "synch": the fact that The Great Gig In The Sky is exactly - yes, *exactly* - the same duration as the storm that blows Dorothy to Oz.



7

Just after the Munchkins have danced in time(ish) to Money, the black-attired Wicked Witch appears, just as the lyrics to Us And Them mention the word "black". Woaaa!



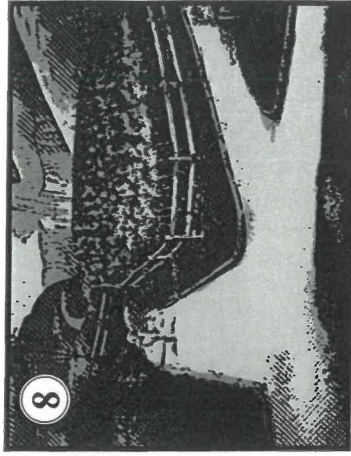
9

Brain Damage: Roger Waters sings "the lunatic is on the grass" as the Scarecrow starts dancing - but on the road, not the grass (though note a later reference to "the path").



6

Just when Dorothy opens a door and the film switches from black and white to colour, the ringing of tills begins Money. Which makes no narrative sense, but whatever...



8

Dorothy leaves Munchkin-land as Money segues into the instrumental Any Colour You Like, which may not look like much on paper, but just you wait.



10

Dorothy tries to find the Tin Man's heart, as Dark Side ends with a heartbeat. Aside from even more wacko theories about letting the film run on and resetting the CD, that's that.



# How to get into Captain Beefheart

It's easy(ish)! And note: compilations are for cheats

① The supposed masterpiece of Captain Beefheart and The Magic Band - i.e. Don Van Vliet (b.1941) and a shifting cast of players - is the chaotic **Trout Mask Replica** (1969). To quote Andy Partridge of XTC, it can sound "like a ball of rusty barbed wire" - so if you're new to Beefheart, go straight to **Clear Spot** (1972), a jaw-dropping album that's the ideal starter. **Songs to start with:** Big Eyed Beans From Venus

④ **The Spotlight Kid** (1972) preceded **Clear Spot**, and is way less consistent, though it's worth sticking with. It's also audibly downcast and self-doubting ("It was a horrible time for the band," said guitarist Bill Harkleroad, aka Zoot Horn Rollo). So, after that, go to the more upbeat **Strictly Personal** (1968): an album partly disowned by Beefheart thanks to disagreements with its producer, but which sounds compellingly like the original spirit of the Delta Blues being bent completely out of shape. **Songs to start with:** Blabber 'n Smoke, Trust Us

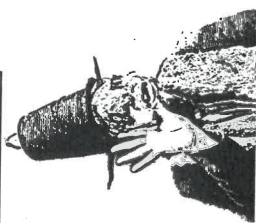


Fig 6.1 *The Trout Mask*

③ And so to **Shiny Beast (Bat Chain Puller)** (1978), which followed the disappointing **Unconditionally Guaranteed** (1974) and **Blue Jeans And Moonbeams** (1974). This has some of TMR's growingl scariness, but is also suffused with **Clear Spot**'s swampy cool, and a surprisingly melodic aspect. Interesting fact: it was recorded at the San Francisco studio where Joe Strummer and Mick Jones were working on **The Clash**'s second album. **Songs to start with:** Tropical Hot Dog Night

⑥ Now comes the big stuff: **Trout Mask Replica**. If you have soaked yourself in the aforementioned music, you will now be ready - as you'll ever be, anyway - for its endlessly disconcerting, unquestionably fascinating 79 minutes. By way of a warning, back to XTC's Andy Partridge, and some more gloriously mixed metaphors. "It sounds like a piece of the Somme, lifted up and put in an art gallery... You're running around stairs and gangways and gantries - it's like being trapped in a mad, giant watch. Do you know what I mean?" You will now. **Songs to start with:** Dachau Blues, Ella Guru

⑤ **Ice Cream For Crow** (1982), Beefheart's last album to date, was partly a deliberate attempt to reawaken the spirit of **Trout Mask**, though it has its (relatively) approachable moments. Ditto **Lick My Decals Off, Baby** (1970), which is a close relation of TMR, but a fraction less out-there. According to those who him, Van Vliet thinks this is his best album. **Songs to start with:** Ice Cream For Crow, Woe-Is-Uh-Me-Bop

# THE BEATLES 1970-80

A user's guide

In December 1970, Paul McCartney started High Court proceedings to dissolve The Beatles' legal partnership, and endured something of a dark night of the soul. The Beatles had effectively called it a day in the summer of 1969, but this development brought the uglier side of their split into sharp focus. "The fact that I had to sue the Beatles was something that was very, very difficult," he later reflected, "cos I could see what that would do in terms of perception of me. People could easily say, 'You know what? I'd never do that, no matter if it meant losing everything. He's a hard-hearted bastard. And a mean bastard. And a money-grabbing bastard.'"

The public didn't seem to think he was any kind of bastard, though John Lennon was soon in the midst of some searing Macca-hatred. Nine months later, in response to supposed pops at him and Yoko Ono on Paul and Linda's 1971 LP *Ram*, he released the album *Imagine*, which featured a lovely little piece entitled *How Do You Sleep*, an attempted demolition of his one-time partner ("Those freaks were right when they said you was dead... You live with freaks who tell you, You was King... the only thing you done was Yesterday"), on which, just to hammer the point home, George Harrison played lead guitar. In turn, just before the year's end, Paul's new vehicle *Wings* put out the decidedly shabby *Wild Life*, which nonetheless contained a fascinating musical olive-branch called *Dear Friend*. By this point, unfortunately, John had moved to the US and apparently had his mind on other things: hanging around with what remained of the '60s counterculture, and singing about such subjects as feminism, the state of American prisons, and the British presence in Ireland - all of which were pretty crassly dealt with on his career-nadir *Some Time In New York City*, one of the few solo Beatles albums that succeeds in being downright embarrassing.

Such, anyway, is the fun to be had listening to the Beatles' early solo records: spotting the veiled-and-not-so-veiled references to each other, and keeping pace with their feelings about Fabdom. John's inaugural solo album contained *God*, in which he baldly served notice that he was no longer the Walrus, and didn't believe in Beatles. On George's 1971 tour de force *All Things Must Pass* - and title-wise, think about it - *Wah Wah* was about an occasion when Paul gave him a headache, and *Isn't It A Pity* contained a backhanded quotation of the "na-na-na" bit from *Hey Jude*. By way of more intrigue, there was *Wings*' 1973 album *Band On The Run*, and *Let Me Roll It* - which referenced John's Cold Turkey, and extended yet another hand of friendship (or there again, it might just be about smoking weed).

One thing is certain: like most half-decent rock groups, The Beatles' four-way bond gave rise to a unique magic, and their solo stuff tended to get nowhere near it. There are flashes of genius, for sure, but by around 1974, all of them had rather surrendered to the essential spirit of the pre-punk seventies, and were indulging in soft-rock bland-out and worse (poor old Ringo's progress through the latter half of that decade is, it has to be said, woeful). Contrary to his posthumous deification, this applied just as much to John as to the other three, and characterised even his and Yoko Ono's 1980 comeback album *Double Fantasy*, a portrait of domestic bliss made in collaboration with highly-paid sessioners, his half of which was alright, but really no masterpiece. Indeed, by this point, there was a strong argument for Paul being the most creatively interesting Beatle, as proved by his second Paul-only album *McCartney II* - which, as with bits of 1970's *McCartney* sounds a little like an early try-out for the home-baked aesthetic later picked up on by the likes of Beck and The Beta Band (no, really).

If you're new to the solo Fabs, you may want to tread carefully. By way of remaining on the safe side, there is a strong argument for going no further than the handful of compilation albums that anthologise the ex-Beatles' solo stuff, and throw forth the odd revelation - like the fact that, for a short period, Ringo was actually a tidy singles artist. But for the brave or curious student of post-Beatles history, the first ten years of the story goes something like this...



Great

After a run of top-hole solo singles, his post-Fabs progress decisively began with the Phil Spector-produced **John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band** (1970), the album that invented angst-rock, and remains essential.

## John



**Imagine** (1971) was another dose of the same soul-baring medicine, sugared by a bit more of Spector's magic. Thus, *Jealous Guy*, *Crippled Inside* and *Oh Yoko!* sound almost MOR by comparison, though the latter remains a real diamond. Note also the ace Gimme Some Truth and How Do You Sleep?; a borderline nauseating dig at Paul (with a mocking George guitar solo) that's grimly compelling.

Oh lord. John and Yoko moved to Manhattan, befriended counter-culture politicians, and made **Some Time In New York City** (1972), a lamentable rent-a-cause album. Feminism, Irish Republicanism and Black Power abound – though the best track is the live Frank Zappa collaboration *Well (Baby Please Don't Go)*, originally done by doo-wop troupe The Olympics in 1958.

Pretty Good

Average

Not Good

Awful

Great

Pretty Good

Average

Not Good

Awful



## Ringo

To begin: **Sentimental Journey** (1970), a pretty pointless set of covers of pre-rock 'standards'. By way of predicting the travails to come, the cover features Ringo emerging from a huge pub.

Such Fabs tracks as *Act Naturally*, *What Goes On* and Ringo's own *Don't Pass Me By* had marked him down as the Country Beatle. **Ergo Beaucoups Of Blues** (1970), made in double-quick time with high-end Nashville sessioners whose CVs included stuff by Elvis and Dylan. It works pretty well, though the public were somewhat bamboozled: in the US, it got no higher than number 65.

Reunion alert! On the career-high that was **Ringo** (1973), John and George backed him on the Lennon-written *I'm The Greatest*, Paul helped out on his own *Six O'Clock*, and there was also the pretty glorious Harrison co-write *Photograph*. Further musical heavy-lifting was delivered by fourthiffs of The Band, Motown's Martha Reeves and Marc Bolan. All told, not quite great art, but more than OK.

And so to **Mind Games** (1973). Such songs as *Bring On The Lucie (Freed People)* and *One Day (At A Time)* are OK – though the bland-out that would soon grip all the ex-Fabs is present and correct. That said, the title track is rather fine – as John later explained, "the middle eight is reggae. Trying to explain what reggae was to American musicians in 1973 was pretty hard."

Whereupon John and Yoko split up, and he hit the sauce. His then-squeeze May Pang argues that the 'Lost Weekend' was more creatively fertile than the brandy/insanity myth suggests, and she has a point. **Walls And Bridges** (1974) – featuring the hit Elton John collaboration *Whatever Gets You Thru The Night* – is a tad more interesting than *Mind Games*, but maybe only just.

Five years of retreat now beckoned, but not before **Rock'n'Roll** (1975), an album of classic covers begun with Phil Spector before no end of craziness put it on hold. It has its moments: *Stand By Me* is great, and the closing cover of Lloyd 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy' Price's *Just Because* sounds movingly valedictory. That said, the phrase 'Cavern Club cabaret' often springs to mind.

The return: **Double Fantasy** (1980) was split between John and Yoko songs and hyped as a portrait of domestic bliss. "I wish that Lennon had kept his happy trap shut until he has something to say that was even vaguely relevant to those of us not married to Yoko Ono," said the man from the NME – and he had a point, but then fate tragically intervened and made DF Lennon's last word.

Harrison and McCartney were absent, but the title track of **Goodnight Vienna** (1974) was provided by Lennon, and there were also turns from two other esteemed Johns: *New Orleans* titan *Dr John*, and Elton. More slapdash than its predecessor, though the drug/booze ode *No No Song* is something of a laugh, and the 1992 CD reissue also features the top 1972 single *Back Off Boogaloo*.

Then came the anthology **Blast From Your Past** (1975), packaging up his best solo stuff so well as to make buying Ringo albums proper the preserve of the hard-bitten or mad. To prove it, then came **Ringo's Rotogravure** (1976) – the title refers to an arcane US name for a Sunday supplement, featuring contributions from John and Paul and a song by George, but no real magic.

Yowza! Thanks to Bee Gees producer Arif Mardin, **Ringo The 4th** (1977) was Starr's disco album, giving off the whiff of expensive cocktails and artistic irrelevance. In the USA, it reached number 162; back home, Polydor Records followed it with the kids' album **Scouse The Mouse** (1977), on which Ringo voiced the titular role of a Liverpudlian rodent. Which was nice.

Did the world need a Ringo cover of the Supremes' *Where Did Our Love Go*? Was there really much mileage in a version of Gallagher and Lyle's soft-rock classic *Heart On My Sleeve*? Wasn't it shameless to take a track from Scouse 'The Mouse' called *A Mouse Like Me* and retit it *A Man Like Me*? All questions prompted by the woeful **Bad Boy** (1978) – after this, it was essentially all over.

Great

His first solo stabs were occasionally ditty, but fair play: **McCartney (1970)** has real charm, and **Ram (1971)** is peppered with such treats as US number 1 Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey.

Paul



After that, things took a rum turn. **Wildlife (1971)** was the first Wings' album, put to tape in little more than a week, and as half-cocked as that sounds – though Dear Friend, his reply to John's anti-Paul tirades is a jaw-dropper. **Red Rose Speedway (1973)** was *way* more polished, but not much of an improvement – aside from My Love, a titanic weepie about Linda (obviously).

Whereupon he got it back, *and how*. **Band On The Run (1973)** was recorded in Lagos, Nigeria, after two of Wings quit. Gleefully, Paul played the drums, and just about everything turned out right: witness the three-part title track, Jet, Bluebird, and another Lennon-reply, Let Me Roll It. Note also the celeb-strewn sleeve, starring – among others – Michael Parkinson and Clement Freud.

Pretty Good

Average

Not Good

Awful

By now, Wings were mulleted international arena-gods, but standards quickly slipped. **Venus & Mars (1975)** has its moments, but is too bland (it closes, for some reason, with a rock version of the theme from TV soap Crossroads), and **Wings At The Speed Of Sound (1976)** was rather let down by the weird idea of letting everyone else sing a song – even Joe English, the new drummer. No!

Back to a three-piece for the period that also threw forth the huge-selling Mull Of Kintyre. The long-forgotten **London Town (1978)** was based on the kind of inoffensive, grown-up pop that defined so much of the 1970s, but the love-soaked and weirdly guitar-free With A Little Luck is still irresistible. One other thing: whose idea was Morse Moose And The Grey Goose?

**Back To The Egg (1979)** did precious little business at the time, but is worth re-visiting. Ignore Spin It On's attempt to ally Wings with punk rock, and instead go straight to cod-soul tune Arrow Through Me, the Macca-does-metal Old Siam Sir, and the gloriously stupid Rockestra Theme, recorded with John Bonham, Dave Gilmour, John Bonham, Hank Marvin, Pete Townshend et al.

**McCartney II (1980)** was a belated companion piece to his first solo album, and *similarly variable-though-impressive*. John Lennon rated Coming Up ("a good piece of work", he reckoned), Waterfalls is a borderline classic, and Temporary Secretary was revived by achingly hip London clubbers circa 2004. But be warned: avoid Bogey Music as you would gout.

Great

**All Things Must Pass (1970)** briefly made The Quieter One the world's favourite ex-Beatle. A frazzled Phil Spector – who, said George, would down 18 cherry brandies before work – produced, and minted a rock version of the Wall Of Sound, with the assistance of musicians including Eric Clapton. An accredited classic, and arguably the best solo Fabs album.

A big delay, and then an unfortunate slip. Oozing a slightly pompous dissatisfaction with the human race – which would define more and more of GH's lyrics – **Living In The Material World (1973)** reached number 1 in the US, toppling Wings' Red Rose Speedway. In comparison to ATMP, however, it sounds muted and underwhelming – though worse, unfortunately, was to come...

George



And then things went really wrong. **Dark Horse (1974)** soundtrack a broken-up personal life, and the vocals often sound like the work of someone gargling with broken glass. One or two songs are OK, but the yuletidey Ding Dong Ding Dong says it all. "George Harrison belongs in a daycare centre for counterculture casualties," said rock writer Lester Bangs. On this evidence, he may have had a point.

**Extra Texture (Read All About It) (1975)** was his last solo album for EMI, and thus widely viewed as a matter of contractual obligation. In that context, it was predictably not much cop, though You – an off-cut from 1971 – harked back to the All Things Must Pass aesthetic with reasonable success. Still, perhaps ignoring Dark Horse, George maligned this as his worst solo album.

**Thirty Three and 1/3 (1976)** didn't really improve matters. As with its two predecessors, the overwhelming air is of high-paid sessioners, wicker chairs and expensive loon pants, and the trademark George slide guitar sound rather gets on one's wick. All that said, there are a few points of historical interest – like See Yourself, started in 1967 as a song about Paul's admission that he'd taken LSD.

For some reason, he now had a perm. **George Harrison (1979)** is the sound of George lapsing happily into de facto retirement: breezily lightweight, though not unpleasant. Fabs enthusiasts should sample Not Guilty, finally released 11 years after being cut from The White Album. It also includes the clunky single Faster, a somewhat Jeremy Clarkson-esque tribute to GH's beloved motor racing.

Pretty Good

Average

Not Good

Awful



# MUSSOLINI, NEIL KINNOCK, LENIN, SHAUN RYDER...

The strange roll-call of people mentioned in songs by the Manic Street Preachers

John Lennon (1940-80)  
*Musician, Beatle*  
**Motown Junk (1991)**

*French politician*  
Vladimir Zhirinovsky  
(b.1946)

*Russian politician*  
Myra Hindley (1942-2002)  
*Moors murderer*

Ian Brady (b.1938)  
*Moors murderer*  
Peter Sutcliffe (b.1946)  
*Serial killer, aka The Yorkshire Ripper*

Beverley Allitt (b.1968)  
*Nurse-turned-murderer, aka "The Angel Of Death"*

Idi Amin (1923-2003)  
*Ugandan dictator*  
Jeffrey Dahmer (1960-94)  
*Serial killer*

Dennis Nilsen (b.1945)  
*Serial killer*

Colin Ireland (b.1954)  
*Serial killer, aka "The Gay Slayer"*

Eugene Terre Blanche  
(b.1941)  
*South African fascist*  
Yoshinori Ueda (1955-2005)  
*Japanese serial killer*

James Pickles (b.1925)  
*English judge-turned-tabloid columnist*  
**Archives Of Pain (1994)**

Winston Churchill (1874-1965)  
*British Prime Minister*  
**The Intense Humming Of Evil (1994)**

Tipper Gore (b.1948)  
*Wife of ex-US Vice President*  
Abraham Zapruder (1905-70)  
*US clothing manufacturer who filmed Kennedy's assassination*

**If white America told the truth - for one day it would fall apart (1994)**

Boris Yeltsin (1931-2007)  
*Russian politician*  
Jean-Marie Le Pen (b.1928)

30

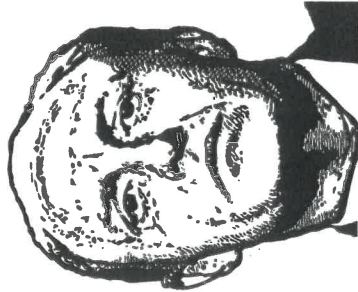


Fig 8.1 Neil Kinnock, referenced thus: "Were we the Kinnock factor?"

Prince William Of Wales (b.1982)

Prince Henry (aka Harry) Of Wales (b.1984)  
*Members of the British royal family*  
**Sculpture Of Man (1994)**

Francisco De Goya (1746-1828)  
*Painter*  
Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)  
*Painter*

Bonnie Parker (1910-34)  
Clyde Barrow (1909-34)  
*American criminals*  
William Payne Stewart (1957-99)  
*American professional golfer*

Jack Kevorkian (b.1928)  
*US Pathologist and euthanasia advocate*  
Brian Warner (b.1969)  
*Musician, aka Marilyn Manson*

Alberto Juantorena (b.1950)  
*Cuban track athlete*  
Klaus Kinski (1926-91)  
*German actor*

Haile Gebreselassie (b.1973)  
*Ethiopian long-distance runner*  
Ethiopian athlete  
Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)  
*Poet*

Werner Herzog (b.1942)  
*German film director, screenwriter and actor*  
**The Convalescent (2001)**

Paul Robeson (1888-1976)  
*American singer and activist*  
**Let Robeson Sing (2001)**

Elian Gonzales (b.1993)  
*Cuban abductee*  
**Baby Elian (2001)**

John Stith Pemberton (1831-88)  
*Inventor of Coca Cola*  
The Dalai Lama (currently Tenzin Gyatso, b.1935)  
*Religious leader*  
Richard Gere (b.1949)  
*Actor*

**Freedom Of Speech Won't Feed My Children (2001)**

Richard Nixon (1913-94)  
*US President*  
**The Love Of Richard Nixon (2004)**

Jimmy McGovern (b.1994)  
*TV Dramatist*  
**S.Y.M.M (1998)**

Kevin Carter (1960-94)  
*South African Photojournalist*  
**Kevin Carter (1996)**

Willem De Kooning (1904-97)  
*Abstract Painter*  
**Interiors (Song For Willem De Kooning) (1996)**

Matthew Maynard (b.1966)  
*Cricketer*  
**Mr. Carbohydrate (1996)**

Phil Bennett (b.1948)  
*Welsh Rugby international*  
Neil Kinnock (b.1942)  
*Ex-Leader of the Labour Party*  
Steve Overt (b.1955)  
*Middle-distance athlete*  
Shaun Ryder (b.1962)  
*Singer, lyricist, co-founder of Happy Mondays*  
**Prologue To History (1998)**

31

George Orwell (1903-50)  
*Author and journalist*  
Jayne Torvill (b.1957)  
Christopher Dean (b.1958)  
*British Ice Dancers*  
Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)  
*Philosopher*  
Johnny Marr (b.1963)  
*Former Smiths guitarist and songwriter*  
Morrissey (b.1959)  
*Former Smiths singer and songwriter*  
**1985 (2004)**

Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)  
*Campaigner for women's suffrage*  
**Emily (2004)**

Jack Lemmon (1925-2001)  
*Actor*  
**Rendition (2007)**

Lee Harvey Oswald (1939-63)  
*Alleged killer of President John F Kennedy*  
**I'm Just A Patsy (2007)**

Norman Mailer (1913-82)  
*Author*  
**Fig 8.4 Norman Mailer: "I am stronger than Mensa, Miller and Mailer"**

32



Fig 8.4 Norman Mailer: "I am stronger than Mensa, Miller and Mailer"

# “It could be the perfect marriage...”

‘Interesting’ collaborations that you’d never have seen coming

## Paul Weller & Peter Gabriel (1979)

In mid-1979, Peter Gabriel’s American record company heard a work-in-progress titled *All Through The Wire*, and asked him to make sound it “more like the Doobie Brothers”. The ex-Genesis singer was having none of it – and seeing as The Jam were recording in an adjacent studio in Shepherd’s Bush, he asked Paul Weller to contribute a scabrous guitar part. “I just love watching him play,” said Gabriel. “He’s like liquid energy.” And what a surprise: the finished song sounded absolutely nothing like the Doobie Brothers.

## Lou Reed & Kiss (1982)

By the early 1980s, the Kabuki-styled rock gods were fading fast. The solution: (Music From) *The Elder*, an esoteric rock opera set in a Tolkien-esque alternative universe. By way of outside input, they recruited producer Bob Ezrin (fresh from working on Pink Floyd’s *The Wall*), and the stratospherically incongruous Lou Reed, who co-wrote three songs. When one of Kiss’s management team heard the results, he said this: “The album doesn’t sound anything like Kiss and no-one is going to buy a Kiss album that doesn’t sound like Kiss.” He wasn’t wrong: it got no higher than number 75 on the US charts.

## Van Morrison & Cliff Richard (1989)

What larks: the legendarily grumpy Belfast blues-mystic roped in Cliff for a seasonal tribute to the almighty entitled *Whenever God Shines His Light*, which reached number 20 in the UK charts, and was honoured with a spot on *Top Of The Pops*. “He’s a professional,” Morrison said of Richard. “It’s great working with somebody like that. He couldn’t be around this long if he wasn’t a great singer. I think he does himself down, though – underestimates himself.”

## Robert Palmer & Lee Perry (1978)

In 1978, the Batley-born lounge lizard travelled to Jamaica to work at the inestimable reggae producer Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry’s Black Ark studio. “You know those joke spliffs you see that are, like, nine inches long?” he later



Fig 8.5 Palmer & Perry: “too abstract”

recalled. “They’d make them out of brown paper and just constantly smoke...It was quite an experience being in there, like, 10 hours a day.” They recorded four songs, but Palmer thought they sounded “too abstract”, and binned them – though one Perry track, *Love Can Run Faster*, appeared as a B-side. Jah evidently did not approve: within a year, the Black Ark had burned to the ground.

## Elton John & Eminem (2001)

No matter that Eminem’s 2000 track *Criminal* contained the line “Hate fags? The answer’s yes” – these two paired off for a heartwarming rendition of Eminem’s global hit *Stan* at the Grammy Awards in 2001. “Let the Boy Georges and the George Michaels of the world get in a twist about it if they don’t have the intelligence to see his intelligence,” said Sir Elt. So that was them told.

## Texas & the Wu-Tang Clan (1998)

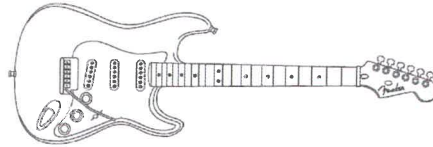
Having re-established their career with 1997’s *White On Blonde*, the Glaswegian troupe led by Shaheen Spiteri reworked their big hit *Say What You Want* with Method Man and RZA from the Martial Arts-obsessed hip hop collective. “Method Man is just a wicked, wicked rapper,” said Spiteri. “I can’t wait to hear the combination of my vocals and his...I have a kind of sweet, virginal thing going on, and he’s got this dirty sex vibe. It could be the perfect marriage.” It really wasn’t, though in Holland, the “wicked” new treatment was a bigger hit than the original. True!



## Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll The Ultimate Guide to the Music, the Myths and the Madness

By John Harris

1st October 2009, hardback, £12.99  
(Embargoed until publication date)



A fascinating, informative and very funny guide to rock and roll from one of our finest music journalists and writers.

Do you want to learn how to play guitar in two pages? Have you ever wondered what goes into Marilyn Manson's backstage rider?\* Do you know what Jimi Hendrix might do with a Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face?

John Harris's *Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll* is the ultimate guide to what Spinal Tap called 'the majesty of rock, the mystery of roll'. Gloriously irreverent, it is also satisfyingly definitive, with a list of every Glastonbury line up; a dictionary of obscure genres from Alt.country to Shoegazing; a brutally honest guide to the Beatles' solo albums; the surprising wit and wisdom of Shaun Ryder and Noel Gallagher; Bob Dylan's collected thoughts on Christianity and Keith Richards' less-collected thoughts on drugs; and a handy flow chart that shows you how to listen to all of Captain Beefheart's albums without going insane.

From essential stage equipment to strange collaborations (Lou Reed and Kiss, anyone?) to the long, tragic journey of the rock moustache, *Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll* is an endlessly fascinating miscellany from one of the best music writers around.

\*(Clue: it's slightly less disturbing than Celine Dion's.)

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John Harris was a writer at the *NME* until 1995, and went on to be the editor of *Select* magazine. He now works across a range of subjects for *The Guardian*, as well as writing for *Mojo*, and is a Contributing Editor at *Q* magazine, with his own monthly column. He is also a regular panellist on BBC2's *Newsnight Review*.



His Britpop history book, *The Last Party* was described as 'Indispensable' (*Q*); 'Smart and funny... clever and compelling' (*The Guardian*); 'The loveliest - and certainly the most human - book about pop music I've ever read' (*The Daily Telegraph*); 'That rare thing: a book principally about rock musicians that is a compulsive page-turner' (*Sunday Times*) and 'One of the finest music books of recent times' (*FHM*)

To interview John Harris or have him write a piece,  
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